



# Post: Goalies Are Not Team Practice Targets

December 11, 2020



As another season begins my child is excited to play between the pipes for this team. As the coach, I would like to remind you that the goalie is not your team's target and I have 6 requests of you. I ask you to keep these in mind as you go about the difficult job of creating practice plans each week.

## **Request #1: Goalies are not targets**

Your warm-up drill for skaters includes more shots than my goalie will see in two games and by the end of practice number one he/she will have stopped more shots than the first 10



worry so much about stopping every shot. The first 7 or 8 shots seem appropriate. By the end of drill 4 that equals about the same amount of shots in a game. You're the coach and I trust you will keep an eye on my goalie as drills progress and be able to assess when they are getting tired and adjust accordingly.

### **Request #2: Goalies participate 100% of the time until your drill is completed and need time to recover**

The goalie position is unlike any other on the ice. Forwards and defensemen skate down one, two or three at a time take a shot, maybe participating in a drill for a couple of seconds or a minute. They then can rest as the rest of the team completes the drill. My goalie is active that entire time and needs time to recover.

### **Request #3: Goalies need time to work on goalie skills**

As a coach you're probably thinking about how you can develop the skaters stickhandling, skating, shooting, and game position skills. Let me introduce you to a few terms you may have heard but don't fully understand a) Stance b) Movement c) Structure d) Depth. I'll let you research each of those to help my goalie to be the best they can be. I ask that these elements are part of your practice plan with time devoted specifically to my goalie so he/she can develop these skills at the same rate as the rest of the team. I assure you that these skills are not developed during a drill where they see 30 shots in two minutes as part of a typical skater drill.

### **Request #4: Goalies need to handle the puck and be in the same condition as everyone else**

When the rest of the team is warming up and doing conditioning drills my goalie should be looked at as a team member and not an outsider who slows down the drill. Stickhandling, skating circles, and end of practice conditioning all matter. Please encourage my goalie to





conditioning. This makes a goalie feel like they are a part of the team and not just the team's target.

### **Request #5: Communicate with my goalie like you do your forwards and defensemen.**

Coach when I say communicate, I don't mean, "goalies get in the net and stop pucks". Coach I see you pull the team in, you pull up the whiteboard or write on the glass. Your drawings are perfect, the plays you draw up would make any coach proud, it usually looks something like this (insert practice plan) with X's and O's and lines connecting where you want players and the puck to do. It's a great plan coach and the entire team stares up at you listening trying to process all that information.

My goalie is one of those players and wants to learn what the team is supposed to be doing. The more they understand what you expect the better they understand what the goalie should do. But coach what my goalie really wants is to be a part of the process. Defense go D to D, forwards one pass and you loop to the center. My goalie is wondering, what is expected of me? Why did the coach just draw out a drill and then not include me?

Coach, the more goalies understands what is expected of them the more they can help the team. For example, that 3 on 2 drill you run, the goalie has the responsibility of watching the puck carrier, but the real threat is in the crease and the best chance of them scoring is the pass far post. You see the goalie not only has to focus on one player (like most forwards and defensemen). Think about it, what's the number one thing coaches say? "Take care of your job" or "win the one on one battle." The goalie has to watch everyone. When the puck is wide who is coming in late for the shot? Is that person right or left-handed? Where are my defensemen? Is he pushing the shooter wide or just letting him come in close? How high is the high guy? If the high guy gets the puck will one of my defensemen try and take him, opening up one of the guys at the post?





know in each situation what you expect of him/her. So, the next time you plan a "simple" 3 on 2 drill, please look at it from my goalies' position and set expectations. What do you want the goalie to do. Give your goalie the same thought you gave your forwards and defense.

### **Request #6: Goalies don't want to be the heroes, they just want to be appreciated**

As we begin the season coach I, as a parent on the team, expect to be cheering for every game winning goal we score, and I will cheer loud. I will not only be cheering for the player who scored but for the entire team.

When a goal is scored five players come together and hug then skate by the bench and get high fives, or when a game winning goal is scored, the entire team jump on the ice and immediately mob the player who scores. Often that goal began with a save or a play my goalie was involved in.

I'm not looking for you to make the goalie the center of attention, which goes for the great and not so great games. Goalies don't want to be the center of attention. If they are it's usually for the wrong reasons.

What I would like you to remember is that as each game begins, there are 5 skaters in front of the goalie. After each whistle there are five defenders in front of the goalie and in order for a team to score the puck must get past those five players before it gets to your goalie.

When we win coach say nice game and when we lose please make it a point to let the goalie know it's not their fault. You see coach, your words mean more than anything I can say to them on the car ride home. Your encouragement and appreciation will only serve to help the goalie grow and motivate them to try harder, not only in the games, but in practice as well.

### **In closing:**





some of my expectations to you in advance it will help you and my goalie build a better relationship which will grow from practice to practice and game to game.

By the end of the season, my goalie will have a year's worth of growth, not only in skills, but also for the love of the game. For that I can only say, thank you. Thank you for understanding that my goalie may be a little different in what he/she needs but at the end of the day he/she is a part of the team.

– Peter Jervis

### **About the author:**

I started playing goalie when I was 5 years old, I played throughout high-school and college, winning an ACHA D1 National Championship with Iowa State. After that, I played professionally, primarily in Jacksonville, FL, with a few other stops along the way. During that time, I was fortunate enough to have been coached by a goalie that played for 10 years in the NHL.

My coaching experience ranges from peewee to Jr A and college. Over my 30 year coaching career I have had goalies to on to NCAA schools and one drafted in the NHL.

I also believe that sports and specifically goaltending teaches important life lessons. Goalies have to learn how to handle the ups and down and never let them see you too high or low. Give up an early goal, forget it and rebound to save the day later. Goalies learn to be leaders and how to work with others. Most of all, goalies realize that their best is all they can do to help their team win. When is the last time you saw a goalie score a game winning goal? Yet the goalie can still be best player on the ice that game!

